

Mr. Sullivan is an assiduous worker, and his professionalism, dedication, outstanding initiative and resourcefulness have been recognized on multiple occasions. He has been awarded more than 30 performance awards, including the Social Security Administration Regional Commissioners Citation, the Social Security Commissioner's Team Award and Biltmore's Who's Who of American Empowering Executives and Professionals.

In addition to his tireless work with the Social Security Administration, Mr. Sullivan is actively involved in his Church and local community. He has served on the St. Anne's Catholic Church Parish Council, as well as its Finance Council. Mr. Sullivan has also volunteered for more than 25 years with the Boy Scouts of America, where he is currently the Vice President of Programs Gulf Coast Council, and numerous scouts in his troop, including three of his sons, have gone on to become Eagle Scouts.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress it is my honor to recognize Mr. John Sullivan for his dedicated career as a public servant and thank him for his service to Northwest Florida. My wife Vicki and I wish Mr. Sullivan, his wife Jennie, and his sons—Richard, John, Matthew, Michael and Taylor—all the best.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 16, 2011*

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, due to the death of a close friend, I was absent from the House on Thursday, December 15th and Friday, December 16th. Had I been present, I would have recorded the following votes:

Rollcall 933—aye;  
Rollcall 934—aye;  
Rollcall 935—aye;  
Rollcall 936—aye;  
Rollcall 937—aye;  
Rollcall 938—aye;  
Rollcall 939—aye;  
Rollcall 940—aye;  
Rollcall 941—aye;  
Rollcall 942—aye;  
Rollcall 943—no.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 16, 2011*

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, due to a personal family matter on December 15, 2011, I was absent from votes. As such, I am submitting these remarks to indicate how I would have voted if I were here: I would have voted No on the Journal Vote, and Yes on H.R. 886, H.R. 2719, and H.R. 443.

RECOGNIZING THE WEST SPRINGFIELD DANCE TEAM ON THEIR TREMENDOUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 16, 2011*

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the West Springfield Dance Team for their incredible run on the nationally televised show, "America's Got Talent". The West Springfield Dance Team progressed to the semi-finals with their professional grade choreography, distinct style, and superb dancing talents.

Under the tutelage of their coaches, renowned choreographers Tara Perez and Jason King, and with the full support of the West Springfield High School community, including principal Mark Greenfelder and Director of Student Activities Andy Muir, the West Springfield Dance Team has received numerous awards and recognitions including back-to-back Championship titles from the National Dance Alliance, including the "Innovative Choreography" and "Best in Category" awards. West Springfield Dance Team has distinguished itself as the dominant team in local and national competitive dance, and it is now a national celebrity for its run on "America's Got Talent" and a recent appearance on "The View" Halloween episode.

Their eye-popping performances were a delight to watch, and these young people served as tremendous ambassadors not only on behalf of their dance team, but also their school, their families and our community. They and their families should be proud of these accomplishments. I know we are, and I want to congratulate the following members of the West Springfield Dance Team for their many successes in the area of competitive dance, their achievements on "America's Got Talent", and recent appearance on "The View":

WS Dance Team 2010–2011 (performers on "America's Got Talent"): Chelsea Kopf and Julian Asuncion

WS Dance Team 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 (performers on "America's Got Talent", and "The View"): Emily Barnes, Dori Shapiro, Katie Lee, Riley O'Rourke, Nicole Mobley, Breezy Thompson, Sarah Thompson, Kristen Toler, Natalie Wawrzeniak, Jordan Penrod, Hannah Ernst, Jordan Dey, Nicky Ditnoy, and May Ditnoy

WS Dance Team 2011–2012 (performers on "The View"): Ellen Abood, Madeline Diez, Victoria Diez, Brianna Burns, Lauren Rader, Danny Lora, and Collin Hensley

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the West Springfield Dance Team on their many accomplishments and awards and for making it into the semi-finals of "America's Got Talent." I thank the team's coaches, Tara Perez and Jason King, Principal Mark Greenfelder, Director of Student Activities Andy Muir, and the entire West Springfield High School community for their robust support of these exceptional students.

TRIBUTE TO U.S. HOUSE SERGEANT AT ARMS WILSON "BILL" LIVINGOOD

### HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 16, 2011*

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a man who may not be a household name in most American towns and cities but who, over the past two decades, has become an integral part of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Honorable Wilson "Bill" Livingood, our outstanding Sergeant at Arms, who will be retiring next month.

Known around the Capitol as the "protector" and "keeper of the House," Bill Livingood has etched his name in the history books for serving the third longest term as Sergeant at Arms of the U.S. House of Representatives. To most Americans, he is the man—and the voice—who for 15 seconds every year announces at the beginning of the annual State of the Union address, "Mr. Speaker, The President of the United States."

Bill was first sworn in as House Sergeant at Arms by Speaker Newt Gingrich on January 4, 1995. He is only the thirty-sixth person to hold this post since the House of Representatives first met in New York City in 1789.

Bill Livingood's remarkable record of public service is even more noteworthy because of the unique experience he brought to the position. He was the first House Sergeant at Arms to possess considerable expertise in law enforcement, an asset that has served the House well during his tenure.

Prior to his appointment, he was Senior Advisor to the Director of the U.S. Secret Service from 1989 to 1995, and a Special Agent with the Secret Service for a total of 33 years. His background includes service on then-Vice President Lyndon Johnson's security detail, as well as spending more than a decade aboard Air Force One.

As an elected officer of the House of Representatives, the Sergeant at Arms is the chief law enforcement and protocol officer of the body, and is responsible for maintaining order on the House side of the United States Capitol complex.

The Sergeant at Arms reviews and implements all issues relating to the safety and security of Members of Congress and the Capitol complex. The Sergeant at Arms also coordinates extensively with the U.S. Capitol Police and various intelligence agencies to assess threats against Members of Congress and the Capitol complex.

Every visitor to the U.S. Capitol, whether it be the President of the United States, a foreign head of state or one of our youngest citizens, can roam safely around the vast Capitol complex because of Bill Livingood's professionalism, his dedication to duty and his considerable experience.

When this most recent chapter of American history is written, it will be noted that Bill served the House during some of the most challenging times in its history, including the 1998 shootings of two U.S. Capitol Police officers, the 9/11 attacks on our country, as well as the anthrax threats to Congress that came in the wake of the 2001 terror attacks. Make no mistake, House security has undergone significant improvements over the last decade

and Bill Livingood's contributions are evident in what is, today, a much safer environment for lawmakers, staff and the public here on Capitol Hill.

As an added tribute to his good stewardship of this important job, Bill served under four speakers, both Democrat and Republican, starting with Speaker Gingrich, then Speaker Dennis Hastert, Speaker NANCY PELOSI and our current Speaker, JOHN BOEHNER. He and his office have been completely above reproach and non-partisan. To say that Bill Livingood is a consummate professional with a sterling reputation for honesty, integrity and class would be a fair way of describing the respect every Member of this House has for Bill.

Mr. Speaker, we are all indebted to Bill Livingood's stewardship and watchful eye over this historic chamber. As he prepares to leave the House in the coming weeks, I join my colleagues and the American people in offering him a hearty "job well done" and wish him all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

#### HONORING THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR ITS TRIBUTE TO OUR FALLEN HEROES

**HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 16, 2011*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Hillsborough County Sheriff David Gee for his efforts to honor fallen military heroes from the Tampa Bay area. At the direction of Sheriff Gee, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office has instituted a program to conduct honor escorts for every fallen hero from Tampa Bay who returns to Hillsborough County. To date, Sheriff Gee and the Hillsborough County Sheriffs have conducted 12 honor escorts for fallen heroes since the escorts were implemented in 2009. While that is 12 honor escorts too many, I am proud to represent a community with an institution as respectful and dignified as the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office.

At the direction of Sheriff Gee, and with the permission of the fallen hero's family, any fallen hero that arrives in Hillsborough County is escorted to any destination. These escorts involve multiple motorcycle deputies, patrol cruisers, and other Sheriff's vehicles, including members of the Sheriff's aviation unit, as the hearse and the family's vehicles are led through the county. Each family is given a copy of a DVD and photo album commemorating the escort to help them heal, remember, and recall that their loved one was a real American hero.

Many of us recall the unfortunate response that many of our veterans received upon their return from Vietnam. One of the great lessons of that tragedy was to always remember the sacrifices of the service member. As Vice-Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I constantly find myself in awe of the sacrifices and efforts that have been made on behalf of our great country by the men and women who have worn the uniform of our Armed Services. Regardless of the politics of the conflicts that our country has engaged in over the course of the last decade, I am proud of and appreciative of the efforts

that Sheriff Gee and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office have taken to honor and respect our fallen heroes. Mr. Speaker, I salute the efforts of not only our brave men and women in uniform, but also that of Sheriff Gee and the Hillsborough County Sheriffs to honor their brothers and sisters in arms and to protect the safety and security of the citizens of Hillsborough County.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. PIERRE BEJJANI

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 16, 2011*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Mr. Pierre Bejjani, the president of the Northeast Ohio Lebanese American Association, NOLAA, as he is honored by the American Nationalities Movement.

Mr. Bejjani was born in Lebanon and immigrated to Cleveland, Ohio 1981. He attended The Ohio State University where he earned a degree in civil engineering. He returned to Cleveland after graduating and began working as a construction manager. Mr. Bejjani started his own business in 1991. Today, he serves as the managing director/executive editor of Profile News Ohio and is the senior partner for Diversity Advertising Agency.

Mr. Bejjani has served the Cleveland community since the mid-1990s. He organized the first Annual Lebanon Day on November 22, 2011. He currently serves as the president NOLAA and vice president of the Cleveland American Middle East Organization. He is also on the boards of Worldwide Intercultural Network of Cleveland, Global Cleveland Initiative and the Recruiting Battalion of Northern Ohio.

As a result of his dedication to the community, Mr. Bejjani has been received numerous awards. He received NOLAA's Community Recognition Award in 2009. In 2010 he was the recipient of the Census 2010 Partnership Award. Mr. Bejjani was also recognized for his work on the U.S. Army Strength in Diversity Program in April, 2011.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in recognizing the life and achievements of Mr. Pierre Bejjani and congratulating him on being this year's American Nationalities Movement's honoree.

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF RICK CASE AUTOMOTIVE

**HON. ALLEN B. WEST**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 16, 2011*

Mr. WEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my friend and constituent, Rick Case, who will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Rick Case automotive in early 2012.

Rick discovered his true passion at an early age, selling used cars in high school from the front yard of his family home in Akron, Ohio. In 1962, he opened his first dealership, Moxie Motors, in Akron, followed by Sharp Used Cars in Barberton, Ohio in 1963.

Rick Case is as excited today about his business as he was 50 years ago and aggres-

sively seeks opportunities to grow the Rick Case Auto Group which currently encompasses 15 dealerships in Ohio, Georgia and Florida and employs more than 900 people.

Recognized as leaders in the auto industry, Rick and Rita Case have received numerous awards; including National Dealers of the Year by USA Today, Time and Sports Illustrated magazines, the American International Automobile Dealers Association and the National Automobile Dealer Association. Most recently Rick and Rita Case were the 2011 recipients of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year Award. Additionally, in 2012, they also became the first couple to ever win the American International Automobile Dealers Association David F. Mungenast National Lifetime Achievement Award.

Beyond running a successful business, Rick and Rita Case founded the Rick Case "Bikes for Kids" program in 1962 and have collected and donated more than 100-thousand bicycles to children in need in their community.

As Rick celebrates this incredible milestone, I am proud to support him here on the floor of the House of Representatives, and am honored to call him a friend.

POVERTY AND THE HALF IN TEN CAMPAIGN

**HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 16, 2011*

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, at this holiday season, it is proper for us to pause and consider the major threat that poverty poses to our nation, and how the path we take to address that challenge will determine whether we succeed in improving America's long-term social, economic, and moral well-being.

Income inequality has risen sharply over the past 30 years. Since 1979, the gap in after-tax income between the wealthiest one percent and middle- and low-income quintiles has more than tripled. Adjusted gross income for working-class families has seen the least growth, and the economic collapse of 2008 put many out of work.

Last year, 49 million Americans—including almost 17 million children—lived in poverty. One in four children in America is considered "food insecure," sometimes going to bed hungry. That number is unconscionable. But poverty is not just a statistic—it impacts our families, neighbors, and communities in many ways.

Shirley G. is a Social Security beneficiary in Harwood Heights, Illinois, who suffers from severe asthma, diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. On September 1, she learned that due to state budget shortfalls, she would have to pay out-of-pocket for her medications. Shirley elected to pay her basic health insurance, rent, gas, electric and telephone bills and NOT buy food. She signed up for a "meals on wheels" program to provide her with one meal per day and relies on a local food pantry for her remaining food needs. She was also forced to ration her medication. The unpredictability of food and medicine has wreaked havoc on her health and she cannot stabilize her asthma or diabetes.

Jack K. worked for decades as a taxi cab driver, but retired with very little wealth. He